

12 (3)



The Danger of Deferring RE- PENTANCE





William Fenner, *Rector* of
Rochford, B. D. *sometime*
Fellow of Pembroke Hall
Ætatis 45. A. 1648.

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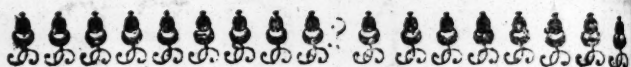
By that Reverend and
Faithful Minister of the

WORD,

WILLIAM FENNER,
Late Pastour of Rochford in Essex.

L O N D O N :

Printed by *H. B.* for *W. Thackeray* at the Angel in *Duck-lane.* 1584.

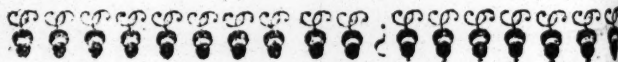


Imprimatur,

Tho. Tomkyns *Reverendissimo Christo
Patri ac D. D. Gilberto divina Provi-
dencia, Archi-Episcopo Cantuariensi
Sacris Domesticis.*

September 7.

1667.



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A Sermon of Mr. *William Fenner's* at *Maidstone.*

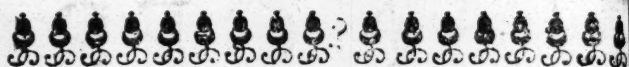
September 23. 1629.

Prov. 1. 28.

Then they shall call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me.

There is a good English Proverb amongst us. That He that neglects the Occasion, the Occasion will neglect him. Solomon wisely begins his Proverbs with it: for he bringeth in the wisdom of his Father in these five particulars:

First, making a general Proclamation in the verse: Wisdom cryeth without, she uttereth her voice in the streets. He compareth God unto a Cryer that goeth up and down the City from street to street, & from door to door, crying of Commodity, even the Richest that ever was, which is a Christ, a Christ for Redemption,



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ver was, which is a Christ, a Christ for Re-
demption,

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demption, a Christ for Sanctification, a Christ
to enlighten those that walk in darkness, and in
the shadow of death : Wo, every one that thirst-
eth, here is a Christ for you.

Secondly, Here is a merciful Reprehension
in the 22. verse : Oh ye foolish, how long will
you love foolishness, and ye scorers take plea-
sure in scorning ? Foolish indeed to be without
Christ, foolish to be without Grace, foolish to
chaffer away our souls for sin ; How long ye
scorers will ye take pleasure in scorning ? Will
you still persist in your wickedness, and never
have done with your sins ? will you never turn
back again, but damn your souls for ever ? O
ye foolish, how long will ye love foolishness ?

Thirdly, Here is a gracious Exhortation in
the 23 verse : Turn you at my correction, Lo,
I will pour out my mind unto you, and make
you to understand my words : As if he should
say, Do you not see how you are going apace to
confusion, and that the way you take leadeth
unto destruction ; turn ye therefore, turn
back again, for there is a Christ behind you,
O turn ye, for if you go on in your sins, you
perish for ever.

Fourthly, Here is a pearning promise made
unto the world, in the end of the 23 verse : Lo,
I will pour out my mind upon you, and cause
you to understand my words. As if he should
say,

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Thy return back again with me, and you shall
 be better welcome than you can possibly
 expect, if you go on in your sins, the Devil will
 never let you gain so much by your living in
 your lusts, as you shall do by Repentance for
 them, and forsaking of them: For Behold I
 will pour out my spirit upon you, whereby you
 shall be far greater gainers, then you shall be by
 your sins.

fifthly, Here is a grievous threatening a-
 gainst the world, even all those that have loy-
 red out the day of Grace: as Time and Tide
 turn for no man, no more doth the day of grace:
 Because I have called, and you have refused, I
 have exhorted, but you have not regarded: I
 have denounced judgments against you for your
 sins, but you have hardened your hearts: Now
 the day of woe and misery shall come upon you: a
 day of vengeance and desolation shall over-
 take you: there will a day come, wherein there
 shall be weeping, and crying: Mercy, (Lord)
 have mercy. But I told you before hand what you
 did you, I trust to: let this be your Lesson, now I call
 you, you shall not hear: now I stretch out my
 hands, but you will not regard: You shall seek
 me early, but you shall not find me, and shall
 cry: Lord, but you shall not be heard.

The words are a Thunderclap against all
 that procrastinate their repentance, and
 return

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return home unto God. Where note, first, the Parties themselves, that do prolong this time of Grace, they, that is, they who when God calls on them, will not hear when God rebukes them by his Mercies, Patience, and Forbearance, by his Ministers and Servants, by his Corrections and Judgements, by fair means and foul means, yet withstanding the means of Grace: They are the men, they shall call, but God will not answer.

Secondly, Here is their seeking after God. They shall call upon me.

Thirdly. Here is their earnest and diligent seeking unto God: they shall not only call but seek too, and not only seek, but seek as labour to find: they shall seek me early, and strive to go about it with all haste, and fly to Repentance, but they shall not find me.

Fourthly. Here is the unseasonableness of the time of their seeking, then, that is a demonstration, then; even a time which the Lord pointed at, as he should say, you shall see [then] the men will be of another mind, then they will be glad to be converted, then they will be glad to come out of their sins, then they will be glad to get Grace, and seek reconciliation to God; but alas, they saw not this then, God fore-saw it well enough: Then shall they call but I will not answer, they shall seek early, but they shall not find me.

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First, **Lastly.** Here is a frustration of their hope, which hath two things in it :

First, In regard of their selves, in regard of the flesh of their seeking, it being not aright.

Secondly, In regard of the Justice of God, who rewards every man according to his works.

But I will not hear them.

Whence observe this point of Doctrine.

DOCTRINE I.

Those that will not hear God when he calleth them, God will not hear them when they call on him. Those that will not hear the Lord as when he calleth on them by the Ministry of his Word, and voice of his Spirit, the Lord will not hear them, when in their misery they call upon him.

Thus the Lord dealt with the people in Eze-
kials days: The Lord called them to repentance and Obedience, but when they stood out, and neglected the opportunity of Grace, and seasons of Conversion, see how God deals with them: Though they cry in my ears with a loud voice yet will I not hear them, saith the Lord. When men have gone beyond the time of Gods mercies, and out-rowed the tide of Gods forbearance, and will not return, the Lord sets it down with himself, that his wrath shall return upon them,

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them, he will no longer forbear, they had a time wherein the Lord did pity them; and offered Grace and Mercy unto them; but they neglected using this season, and notwithstanding this promise of Grace, God resolves with himself they shall never have it again: There was a time wherein God did pity them, but now he will not pity them any more; Twenty five years he called unto them, and sought to bring them home; but because they stood out and refused, the LORD saith, I will love Ephraim no more.

Beloved, there is a double day, a white day and a black day; there is a day of Salvation, Isa. 49. 9. This is the day, in which the Lord said to the Prisoners, Come forth: and to those that lye in their sins, Repent and believe. Now if any man will come forth and humble his soul before the Lord, let him come and welcome, for it is a day of Salvation. But there is another day of Damnation, which is a dark day, a black and a dusky day, wherein the Lord will visit the sins of the world, and revenge the quarrel of his Covenant, Hos. 9. 7. The day of visitation is come, yea, the day of repentance, the people shall know it: The Prophet is a fool, and the Spiritual man is mad. Beloved, we are fools; and all the spiritual men under heaven are mad, that lay not this day to heart: for the day

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At a time of the Lord is a day of visitation and all
offerings. World shall rue it, though now men sleep in
neglect. If once mercy be rejected, and God
his presence away his ear from a man, then grace shall
be no more, the door of life shall for ever be shut
against him; and when once this day comes,
he will have lost his own peace, and deprived him-
self of eternal happiness.

Now there are three Reasons of this point:
The first is, the Law of Retaliation; of rendering
for like, which is the justest Law that can
be made with man: For to give unto every man
according to his works, to make him take such
as he brings, (as the Heathen calls it) to give a
Lord an quid for quo. Now if GOD call upon
those that hear, and thou wilt not hear, it is Righteous-
ness with God, yea, Equity with God (that is
his Soul) that when thou callest on him, he should
come, and hear thee, for thus runs the tenure of Gods
Law, *Pro. 28. 9.* He that turns away his ear
from hearing the Law, even his Prayer shall be
abominable. He that turns away his ear from
Gods Law, God will turn away his ear from
his Prayer. He that turns, it is spoken in the
next sentence, that is, he that now turns away
his ear, his prayer shall be abominable (in the
next sentence); that is, the Lord marks what
Father or Servant, what Father or Mother,
what Husband or Wife, what man or woman
it

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It is, that turns away the ear of his heart, the ear of his heart from hearing his Will, obeying of his Commandments; the Lord takes special notice of it, and sets it down in his Balender, and records it in his Memory, keeping a strict account thereof, as if God should say, Well is it so? I now call, and will not call any man or that woman answer: do I not stretch out my hands, and will not they take care to obey me? Well, let them alone (saith God) there is a Day coming that I shall be a hearing to them: times of sorrow and misery will take hold of them, and then they in their affliction will cry unto me, but I will not hear; they will beg for mercy, but I will not regard; they will seek me early, but they shall not find me.

It was one of the Articles of High Treason brought in against Cardinal Woolsey, that he had the Dore, and stinking breath, and yet durst come into the Kings presence. So it will be an Article against thee of High Treason before the King of Heaben, if thou come into his presence with the stinking breath of thy sins, living in thy lust, and wallowing in thy filthiness: all thy prayers are but so many stinking breaths in the nostrils of the Lord: and every duty that thou performest unto the Lord, shall be as so many Articles of high treason against thee to condemn thee, because thou livest in Rebellion.

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His Prayer shall be abominable: he doth not
I will turn away mine ear from hearing
his prayer which turns away his ear from hear-
ing my Law; (that is the true exposition of the
words :) no, like for like is sometimes in justice
if a man should strike a Magistrate a box
on the ear, it were not Justice for him to gibe
another, for it is a greater sin to strike a
Magistrate, than any other common person: and
therefore a greater punishment the Law re-
quires. So God doth not say, he will turn a-
way his ear from the hearing of his prayer, but
will serve him in a worse kind: he will count
it abominable, yea, abomination (in the ab-
stract) it shall be loathsome, yea, loathsomeness it
is, in the worst manner. Gal. 9. As a man sow-
eth, so shall he reap, if thou sow sparingly, thou
shalt reap sparingly: If thou sow a dull ear to
Gods word, thou shalt reap a dull ear from God
thy prayer: for God will reward every man
according to his works.

Secondly, Because the time of Gods attri-
butes, both Mercy and Justice have their season
in this life: when Mercy hath acted her part,
then cometh Justice upon the Stage and acteth
her part; so that God will have his Attributes
manifested to all the sorts of men, yea, to
the face of the whole world. There is no mar-
ket nor fair day that lasteth alwaies: if the
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Country will not come in, the Tradesmen
put up their wares and be gone: but if
come in time, they may have a penny-worth
otherwise if they come too late, they will
none: For the Merchant will not alwaies
in Tents, but away he goeth, and will not
for them. Beloved, Gods standing is now
and his shop is set wide unto the Sons of
if men will not come in, cheapen, & buy
out money, whilst God offers his wares,
will put them up and be gone: for the
chant will not lose his wares, which he
do, if he should alwaies remain in the
Air with them; if he alwaies continue in
fields expecting Customers, his Wares will
spoil and rot. So it is with God, how
sweet counsels doth he lose? how many
exhortations? How many blessed Sermons
and Holy Sacraments, and Sabbath's doth
lose? How many checks of Conscience? How
many days of Grace, and motions of
Spirit have been squandered away in vain?
you think that God will lose all these, and
them rot upon the Stall, with staying for you.
No, no, the day of Grace and Mercy will
an end, and then the day of wrath and
revenge will step up: To day if you will hear
voice, then harden not your hearts: they
hardened their hearts, and would not be

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Gods mercy to forsake their sins. Therefore
he sware in his wrath that they shall ne'r enter
into his rest, If it be so with you as it was
with Israel in the wilderness, in the day of
temptation, you do not know but that your sins
may now begin to pluck vengeance upon you :
I tell you, if you harden your hearts this day,
you do not know, but that this very day the
Lord may clap one Vath upon your heads.
That you shall never enter into his rest : for one
of the self-same occasion lasts not alwaies, as
every day is not a market day, nor every week
the year a fast week, nor every season in the
year a time for Spring or Harvest : so every day
of a mans life may not claim to be the day of
repentance. Therefore if a man fore-thoweth it now,
fore-thoweth his own happines, and putteth
his own peace for euer.

Excellent is that annotation of Gregory, on
Job. 27. 9. Will God hear his cry when trou-
ble cometh upon him? Beloved, now Gods pa-
ience is troubled, wilt thou not repent? Now
his Spirit is troubled, wilt not thou obey? Now
his Justice is troubled, wilt not thou relent?
Now Gods Spirit is troubled, wilt thou re-
fuse to hearken? will God hear his cry? He speak-
eth interrogatively : as if he should say, Art
thou so mad, so vain, so foolish, to promise to
thy self, being an Hypocrite, that God will
hear

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hear thy prayer ! Oh no, then Justice cometh
take place.

Thirdly, It is Gods use to do so in other things
even upon the contempt of temporal blessing
and therefore much more in matters of Grace
and Salvation. Thus God promised to give
Israel the Land of Canaan, Numb. 12. 27. the
text saith, They tempted God ten times
that is, (as some Expositors expound it) many
times. or (as others) ten several times. Now
what ever the meaning of the text be, certainly
it was very many times : so long, till at last
He swore in his wrath, that they should never
enter into his rest. Beloved, though there be many
now a hot swearer that regards not an oath : yet
certainly, if the Lord swear, we may believe
him : the Word of God is as strong as Death.
if he say it upon his word, we are bound to believe
it ; how much more then when he confirms
it with an Oath. Therefore if the Lord
swear, thou shalt not, how darest thou : How
canst thou hope or think ever to enter into
his rest ? This was almost forty Years before
they died, that the Lord made this Oath
against them : and God knows how many thousands
of them fell short, not only of the land of
Canaan, but also of the Kingdom of Heaven.

So God took Ishmael, an hundred and twenty
years before he died : twenty Years before

offer

Deferring Repentance.

ffered him grace and repentance, but he would
not take warning: a Mocker he was, and a
Mocker he would be, for he mocked Isaac when
was a Child of six years old: and no means
could reclaim him, before he heard the voice,
that out the Bond-woman and her Son: Dut
thy him (saith God) for he shall never be Petr
thy thy Son: This was an hundred and se
nten years before Israels death.

And so God took Saul five and thirty or six
and thirty years before he dyed, according to
Josephus Chronology (if it be true) howsoe
er he took him divers years before his death;
so the Scripture makes it plain, 1 Sam. 15.
The strength of Israel will not lye nor re
pent: for he is not a man that he should repent.
Therefore because thou hast rejected the word
of the Lord, the Lord hath also rejected thee
from being King. And do not think thou by thy
tearers, and crying God mercy, canst ever alter
him, for his counsel is immutable, and he is
strong in his decree, and cannot change: Wi
therto grace and mercy hath been offered thee,
which if thou had embraced, thou mightest have
obtained mercy from the Lord, and the Kingdom
should have been established and confirmed un
to thee: but now it is too late, For the
strength of Israel cannot lye.

God took Esau fifty years before his death:

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for so long he lived, after he sought the blessing with tears: but he was a hunting when God was calling: He was following his Propriety, when God was wooing him to repentance: At last when he called for Repentance and sought earnestly, yea his soul was careful for to get it: yet he could never obtain it though he sought it earnestly with tears fifty years before he dyed.

Now if the Lord so severely punish contempt of temporal blessings; Oh how will he punish the contempt of proffers of Grace and Salvation! I tell you God will be more strict in punishing of this sin, than of any other sin; he will come with Martial law against all those that condemn his Gospel, John 3. 18. He that believeth not is condemned already.

Doth Christ preach Repentance and Salvation, and the Kingdom of God, and wilt thou not repent and believe? Martial law (Beloved) Martial law, hang him up, for he is condemned already: Even like a Souldier that rebels against his General, or forsakes his Colours, they do not cast him into Prison, nor lay for the Assizes or Sessions, but give him Martial law, even hang him up: So if the Lord sound the Gospel in thine ears, and offers thee conditions of Peace, knocking at the door of thy heart by his Spirit, and thou re-

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use to open to him, thou art condemned already, For the strength of *Israel* cannot lye, nor repent. & therefore take heed now whiles his word sounds in thine ears, while his Spirit secretly whispers in thy heart to thee; open to him, for else thou art condemned for ever.

Take notice then, that God doth commonly give men a day, and no man nor Angel doth know how long this day lasteth; to some it lasteth to their last gasp, to some to their old Age, and to some it is cut off in their Childhood: God gave the Angels a day, the which because they neglected, they are reserved in Chains of darknes, untill the great judgment day. God gave Cain a day, Gen. 4. during all the time of this day, though Cain sinned again and again, and went on in his Sins a great while, yet he heard nothing but a still voice: If thou doest well *Cain*, shalt thou not be accepted? but if thou do ill, sin lieth at the door. But when no means will prevail, but Cain will go on, adding sin to sin, and murder unto all the rest of his Sins, and so let go the season of Mercy: the Lord tells him from Heaven, that the day of Grace is past, the gate of Mercy is shut against thee, For thou art now accursed from the Earth; As if the Lord should say, Before I gave thee a day of Salvation, and offered thee mercy, but thou wouldst not ac-

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cept of it, but now I have clapt a curse upon thy Soul, that thou shalt never claw off. God gave Nineveh a day to repent, Jonah. Yet forty days and Nineveh shall be destroyed. God gave the Fig-tree a day, even three days before he would have it cut down. God gave the old World a day of an hundred and twenty years; during this time, God sent unto them Noah, a Preacher of Righteousness, to call unto them to repent; and to let it down also, that his Spirit should not always strive with man, but his time shall be an hundred and twenty years: Yet one writes the Lord cut off twenty of the hundred and twenty years, because of their iniquities; which were so grievous, and provoked him so much, that he hastened him to come before he would have done. In all this space if they had repented, they would have found mercy from the Lord; but when this time was gone, and the day of grace was out, the Deluge came in upon them, and God by his Judgments overthrew the whole World.

Object. You may ask me, when this day of season of grace doth end or cease?

Ans. I answer, that neither men nor Angels can tell; But this I say: It may be yet this day of grace lasteth unto thee: Now it may be God wounds thy heart, and gives thee grace for purpose

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purposes and resolutions: Now it may be the
Lord Jesus passeth by thee in a good Thought
and Desire, lay hold on it: For thy day may
paste this very night, for ought thou knowest,
Luk. 27. 22. The time shall come (saith Christ)
when you shall desire to see one of the days of
the Son of man, and shall not see it. Now is
the day of Christ upon you; now is Christ offer-
ing and preaching himself to you; but if you
let this pass, thou mayst desire to have one of
the drops of that blood that hath been offered
to thee, and yet never have it; thou mayst de-
sire to feel one rap of that Spirit that hath
knockt at thy heart, and yet go without it;
thou mayst entreat for one dram of that Mercy,
that hath been offered and thou hast rejected,
but it shall never be granted to thee. God may
lay that fearful Sentence upon thee, Now
henceforth never grow fruit upon thee: never
Repentance come into thy heart more.
If now thou wilt not repent, and be converted,
the Lord may set it down in his decree from
this day forward, that thou mayest tumble a-
bout thy sins, but shall never get victory over
them; thou mayest ever be mourning for thy
corruptions, but never mourn aright for them;
thou mayest blunder about Repentance, but ne-
ver do the work.

Ezek. 24. 23. You shall not mourn nor weep

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but you shall pine away for your iniquities, and mourn one towards another. There is many a soul condemning of God, and not taking up Repentance, while they may have it, upon whom the Plague of God is come, that they are ever repenting, and are never able to repent, ever posing upon their Sins, but never able to come out of them: they pray, and pray against them, but their prayers moulder away under them: For they shall pine away for their iniquities. What is the reason? He sheweth in the 13. verse; Because I would have purged thee, and thou wast not purged, thou shalt not be purged any more. Because I gave thee Line upon Line, Precept upon Precept, Motion upon Motion, Sacrament upon Sacrament, Sabbath upon Sabbath, & Ordinance upon Ordinance: Because I used all fair means & foul means: I awakened thy conscience, & stirred up the motions of grace in thee. But because I would have cleansed thee, and thou wast not cleansed, thou shalt never be cleansed. A fearful Sentence it is, if mens hearts were soundly opened to consider rightly of it.

And as there is a Personal Day, so there is a national day; If the Nation turn unto God, during that time, then the Nation shall find Mercy, but if they neglect that day, then God will hide those things from their eyes, that be long to their peace; as Christ saith of Jerusalem,

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ties, and Jerusalem, *Lu. 19. 42.* O Jerusalem, if that thou hadst known in this thy day the things that did be-
 taking unto thy peace, but now they are hid from
 mine eyes: In this day, if thou hadst known it
 God, during that day, it had been happy for thee: but
 and now the day of grace is gone, the Lord hath
 concealed it from thee, and thou shalt never
 receive it any more.

Some mens days of grace God endeth even
 in their very Child-hood: Therefore if there
 be any little ones, and Children here in this
 Congregation, that are of Age to know what
 I speak, I speak, to them I speak,
 that they take heed how they rebel against the
 commandment of a Father or Mother or
 Pastor, against the teaching of Gods Word:
 & Or though you be Children, yet God may in-
 flict judgments upon your heads; for not on-
 ly the day of Grace, but also the day of life,
 may be cut off from Children: as 2 Kings 2.
 4. Four and Twenty Children were torn in
 pieces for mocking the Lords Prophet. Some
 mens day of grace is shut up until their youth-
 ful age, some until their old age, some not until they
 are dying, and if they refuse, then they are
 sure to perish for ever: I know the
 day of grace may have several returns, but at
 last Gods Checkers will be finally shut up.

Object. May not a man be called at the ele-

The danger of

venth or twelfth hour of the day : The danger : He
 grace lasteth alwaies : and doth not the day in the
 He call the day of life the day of grace ? 2. Why stand
 6. 2.

Ans. It is true, the Lord called men the not h
 the eleventh or twelfth hour : but yet look, and no M
 you shall see in *Matthew* twenty, that they were called
 not called at the first hour, nor at the second hour, look
 nor third hour, nor at the sixth and ninth hour in, w
 That is, he doth not say, he found the same the sixth
 men that he found at the first, and third, sixth and
 and ninth hours, but he saw others standing. Object.
 for those that were called at the first hour, came in and t
 in at the first hour, and they that were called on
 called at third hour, came in at the third hour hope fo
 and they that were called at the sixth and ninth hour negation
 hours, came in at the sixth and ninth hour. Ans. 3.
 Well, doth God call thee in thy Childhood day of Gr
 in thy youth, or in thy middle age : no. In re
 at the first, or sixth, or ninth hour, now consist of it
 in and labour in Gods Vineyard : and work to a pe
 out your salvation with fear and trembling. 2. In t
 And make use of the season of grace, no. 2. In t
 whiles it is upon you : for if thou be called here ; for
 at the first hour, the sixth is for another, and force of
 not for thee : if thou be called the sixth hour therefore
 the ninth hour is for others, and not for thee not to be
 if thou be called the ninth hour, the eleventh is in t
 hour is for others, and not for thee, The Tenth he is
 tai t

Deferring Repentance.

The Parable : He came and found others standing in the market place, and said unto them, e? 2. Why stand ye idle? and they said unto him, A man hath hired us : as if they should say, we need men, we not had any means of salvation, we have not look, and no Ministers to preach unto us ; but now they would calls upon thee to come in, this is the second hour, look unto it : If God call thee, see thou come in, whether it be at the first or third hour, the sixth or ninth hour, lest the Lord in his wrath, smite clap hardness of heart upon thy Soul.

standing Object. But you will say ; That the day of life and the day of Grace are parallel'd and that one worketh one to another : and therefore there is no hope so long as a man remains in the Condemnation and reprobation of the living.

hour. Answer. It is true indeed, That the day of Grace lasteth as long as the day of life. In regard of others, for others are so to be comforted of it ; the Master is to look to his people, and would to a people to be converted as long as they are living.

2. In regard of a mans Self, he is bound to believe ; for the commandment of Faith standeth in force of a man so long as he lives ; And therefore infidelity and despair not to cease till a man is actually in hell : when he is in hell, then they are no sins, because he is not commanded to believe, but are
part

The Danger of

part of the punishment of the damned ; whilst a man liues it is a Sin, for men are bound to lay hold upon Christ, and to believe what hour of their life soeuer.

3. It may be so said to last all a mans long, because it is bound within the compass of life; for no man hath a day of grace after his life.

But what is the meaning of all those figures which shew how God doth deliver up man unto the spirit of giddines, and unto the spirit of slumber : And what means the hardning of mens hearts, and searing of mens Consciences, but only to shew that the day of grace may end unto a particular man, ten, twenty, thirty, nay, forty years before his death.

1. Because God may harden mans heart. Jerem. 12. 10. and deal with them as will, and Israel is the Rock, so shut up their hearts, they shall never melt at any Sermon, never wrought upon by any Judgment, God hath closed them up in a Rocky heart, that he said of them, Can the Blackamoor change his skin or the Leopard his spots, then may they do good that are accustomed to do evil. The hardness of the blackamoor is only in the outside of the skin, yet all the art under the heavens cannot blot it out: So if once hardness possess thy soul all the preaching of the Ministers, and all the

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red ; Mans of grace in the World, can never bring
n are unto that frame and temper as to make it
o believeth under the hand of God : I tell thee, thou
t wilest to come unto Sermons day after day
mans refuseth to repent, living still in thy Sins,
ompassion is no hammer nor no battle in the world
after the hard than thy heart : as those men & wo-
n that sit under the Preaching of the Word,
se hear the Doctrine of life, like Rain from
er up to be, beating and knocking on their Con-
the senses, and on their hearts, to awaken them
hardening of their Sins and yet notwithstanding will
Conscientious ; at last they prove to be deaf Adders
of grace stop their ears against the Word, charmi-
twelve charmer never so wisely.

h. 2. God may serve mens Consciences : Doth
s hear Conscience tell thee thou art a Luke-warme
as wilt thou not be reformed ? Doth
ts, the Conscience tell thee, that thy Prayers and
never thy Religion is rotten and unsound, and
having thy Repentance is Hypocritical and
he said, & that for all thy vain hopes, thou art
his skin dresser, and yet remainest in thy sins,
they do wilt thou not be bettered hereby ? Take
be blam'd : for that man that runs on in sin against
the voice of his own Conscience, that man
cannot be the Sin of Saul, 1 Sam. 13. 8. God bid
thy soul in say se: in days until Samuel come, Saul
all the days full seven days within one hour, at last
his

The Danger of

his lust began to bawle : What shall
 stay for a Prophet thus long ? Stay,
 his Conscience : Why ? (says Saul) I
 ed so long, even seven days lacking but
 hour : Stop (saith God to his Conscience)
 the Word of God bids thee stay so long ;
 stayed one day, and two days, and six days,
 seven days, but one hour : Stay (saith
 Conscience : no he would not ; but I to
 my self (saith the Text) as if he should
 I hardened my heart to do it, though the
 of the Lord bid me stay, and not do it ; yet
 forced my self to do it : What was this
 Sin ? was it his offering of the Sacrifice,
 calling upon the Lord by Prayer ? No
 Lord commands us to call upon him in
 of distress, and being commanded, it was la-
 ful : Was it his Sin to meddle with
 Priests office ? No, for he did but appoint
 Sacrifice, the Priest offered it : What,
 it the breaking of one hours time ? No, for
 had Sinned more against God than so :
 this was his sin, that he went against his
 conscience : when God stood in the way, when
 conscience stood in the way ; Conscience said
 but he would not stay. And this is the
 of many Thousands among us ; Mens Con-
 sciences tell them, that they must not be
 ards ; mens Consciences tell them that the

I
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 hearers,
 professors,
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 Noah stand
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 et he wou
 Object. I
 ing and

Deferring Repentance.

at Hall
Stay, ~~not~~ be ~~Worldlings~~, they must not be
ul) I ~~hearers~~, they must not be Luke-warm
ing but ~~professors~~, they must pray better than they do,
science) have other faith than yet they have, if ever
long; mean to be saved: Wilt thou yet against
x days, Conscience force thy self to go on in thy
(saith) us, from day to day, and never be reformed?
t I lo the heed lest the Lord be provoked to set thy
ould upon thy head, and shut thy heart, and
the ad elude thy eternal destruction.

it; yet *Object*. Suppose I go on in my sin, and follow
his m wicked courses now; what if I seek him
office, hereafter, and humble my soul before him with
No fasting and Prayer, and when I lye upon my
in ti Death-bed, I send a Ticket unto my Minister
was la pray for me, will all this do me no good?

with *Answ.* Surely (saith God, Jer. 15. 1)
point though Moses and Samuel stood before me,
at, my affections could not be towards this
do, fo people: cast them out of my sight. Wilt thou
to: stick upon thy Death-bed. Were Samuel, Job
his co Daniel, the Minister of this Parish, & thou
en C couldst send thy Ticket unto them, desiring
id sh them to remember thee in their Prayers? If
the S Noah stood in the Pulpit, and Job and Daniel
Conf were here before the Lord for to plead for thee,
Dum et he would not hear thee.

at th *Object*. But suppose I humble my self by Fa-
m stitg and Prayer, will not God hear that?

Ans.

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Ans. No, if thou neglect the day of grace. Jer. 14. 12. When they fast I will not hear, and when they offer Oblations, I will not accept their cry, but I will consume them by sword, by Famine, and by Pestilence. You set up your Fastings, Prayers, and Humiliations, you may lament and mourn, and pine in your selves in your Sins, but it is not all your prayers and Fastings, it is not all your lamentations and mourning that will do you good so long as the Counsel of the Lord is rejected. Because I called, and ye would not answer, therefore you shall call, but I will not hear. They thought the Lords ear would alwaies be open, and that when they called the Lord would have answered, and that the day of grace would ever remain, but God saith: I will not hear them; They would never have sought, if they thought the Lord would not hear them, all their seeking was in vain.

Object. You will say, At what time soever a sinner repenteth he shall have mercy.

Ans. It is true, if thou repent from the bottom of thy heart: but thou must come to many a degree of Repentance, and yet never repent whilst thou livest; if thou repent from the heart, and root out thy Sins, then God will put away thy sins, but thou may go on in Repentance, and calling upon God, and perform

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many duties of Religion, and yet be hard-
: Look how much Religion will stand with
love, if much thou maist have after the day
grace is gone : Self-love may make a man
to prayer, and run after Sermons, and go
in many holy duties, and give over many
s. Look how far self-love may drive the un-
holy duties, so far thou maist go, and yet not-
withstanding remain hardened. ¶ therefore
us not delay, nor put off the time of grace,
let go salvation while it may be had : Then
all they call, but I will not answer : He doth
set down when this time is, it may be it is
now, it may be not this seven years, it may be
till thy death.

DOCTRINE. II.

It may be this very day, even this very Ser-
mon, this very hour, may be thy day that art
now in thy sins, that if thou repent not at this
very Sermon, thou neglected eternal life for e-
ver. Lose the benefit of this Sermon at this time
thou maist lose eternal salvation, & ne'r have
more, the thief that robbed this day, how doth
know but this one day may bring him to the
gallows ? So the man that sins this day, how
doth he know but that this very dayes work
may bring him to Hell ? Dent. 32. 35. To God
belongs

The Danger of

belongs vengeance, their feet shall slide in time : Then if a man sin against him, he stand to day, and to morrow, and many dayes, but when the due time comes, even which hath set, then up goes his heels, he shall and break his neck : the hour-glass run in Heaben, and thou seest not when the comes to the bottom, but when 'tis out, thou down thou goest to Hell for ever.

There was one resolved to kill Julius Caesar such a day : the night before a friend sent him a Letter to acquaint him with it, but being Supper and busie : I will not look upon it now, saith he, to morrow is a new day : The next day when he should have read his Letter, he was stabbed : whence this Proverb came in Greek To morrow is a New Day ; God sends thee a Letter and a Message from Heaben to repent and come out of your sins, or for ever to Hell : to day be converted and sanctified, or for ever be hardened. Dost thou refuse to hearken to day, and puttest it off to morrow ? it may be to morrow may be a day of Gods wrath, and then thou must be hardened, scared, and bound over unto the great day of Gods vengeance : To morrow may set the decree upon thy Soul ; then shalt never repent. Therefore if thou refuse this, thou refuseth all ; For thou

know

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knowest thou, but this very day may be thy
 The reason is, because Gods patience is in
 upon Breast; and who can tell how long it
 will last? Hast thou Moyses his Glass-window
 to look in Gods secret Counsel? Hast thou a
 key-hole to look into Gods Treasure? Canst
 thou stand on Tiptoe, to look over Gods shoul-
 der to look into Gods Decree, to see how long
 his patience will last? It may be God hath suf-
 fered thee till this day, thou art guilty of ten
 thousand sins, and yet he is patient towards
 thee: God hath stayed thus long for thee, that
 thou mayest know I know not how many Waths;
 God hath borne thus long with thee, thou hast
 I know not how many Ayes, profaned
 I know not how many Sabbaths, contemned
 I know not how many Ordinances, and alighted
 I know not how many judgments? yet Gods
 patience is in his own breast; it is the long suf-
 ferance of God. Thou maist say, I would
 have it to morrow, and this seven years,
 but alas it is his long sufferance, and not thine:
 and how dost thou know when he will con-
 sume it? It may be this day as well as to-
 morrow, Joel 2. 13. Rent your hearts and not
 your garments (saith the Prophet) for the Lord
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The Danger of

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God hath borne thus long with thee, thou hast
known I know not how many Lyes, profaned
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The Danger of

First, It is a descriptivum [for] he is a gracious and a merciful God: Therefore rent thy heart, and let thy Soul burst within thee: thou hast sinned against him, for he is a merciful God, and it may be he will pardon all thy sins and heal all thy Rebellions committed against him.

Secondly, It is an upbraiding [for] upbraiding for thy sins; rent thy heart therefore why? he is a patient God: wilt thou go on in thy sins against such a patient God? and rebel against such a loving Father that hath loved thee with so much compassion? Rent thy heart for he is patient.

Thirdly, It is a comforting and encouraging [for] Rent thy heart, for there is encouragement for thee to repent, give over thy sin, and go to the Throne of Grace: for there is much Mercy to welcome thee, and great patience for to bid thee welcome home, and abundance of Grace for to incourage thee: Therefore rent thy heart, and come unto the Lord, for he is patient and long suffering.

Fourthly, It is a fore-warning [for:] Rent your hearts, for the Lord is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness. Yet his Mercy lasteth, yet his patience endureth, yet he hath all his Attributes, and yet he is pleased to manifest the same, still rendering

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care and mercy unto thee. Turn unto him, while these indure, or else thou shalt perish for ever.

Fifthly, It is a threatning [for] Now he is mercifull, now he is merciful, but his mercy will end, his patience will end: and then if thou hast not rent thy heart before, it will be late then: Therefore, as ever thou lovest thine own Soul, now rent thine heart, and turn unto God.

It is Gods own Proclamation, The Lord is slow to anger, and of great mercy, and forgiving of iniquity and sin. Yea, what man soever be, that humbles his Soul before him, he shall find grace and mercy with him; yea, abundance of mercy pardoning iniquity, transgression and sin: yea, any thing: Let but a Soul come prostrate before him, humbling his Soul, he will pardon his Sin: But as it follows in the words, He will by no means pardon the guilty: If notwithstanding all Gods Patience and Mercy, if thou go on in thy Sins, the Lord will never forgive thee, but will visit thy Sins upon thee unto the third and fourth Generation, because thou hast withstood the day of Grace. Beloved, men run on in their sins, as if he an Angel from Heaven should cry unto them, and tell them, yet God will be good unto them, yet God will shew them Mercy,

The Danger of

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unto them, yet God will shew them Mercy,

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and forbear them. Beloved, let your Conscience answer if ever you heard the Lord say to any of you, thus long I will forbear you. No, God's patience is in his own Breast, therefore no man knows how long it will last, him,

Reas. 2. A second reason is, Because God's patience giveth no marks or inklings of it before it ends: Commonly when God strikes a man with Death, he gives some signs or warnings of it before, as Sickness, and pains, and gray hairs, and many sorrows, &c. Now thou art in a cause thy life is in Gods hands, thou canst not for it, but ventureth to go on in the same, hoping to have some warning, though he stands he cut off without it; But the day of his Grace may come to an end, and yet thou hast not an inkling or warning of it before, have been by Aches and Pains, as if the Lord should cry like say, Now thou shalt dye now I will devour thee out of the World. But when the Lord taketh away the day of grace from a man, though the Spiritual man may take some notice of it, yet there is no sensible apparition of it, but after the day of grace is set upon them, a man, he may be as strong and lusty as before, he may come to Church as well after as before, the Lord perform Religious Duties, and do many good things as well after as before, As some have done, went on in duties of Religion, as well after as before.

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Confessor. As Saul went on in Duties of Religion
 Lord God well after Samuel had pronounced the Lords
 bear down upon him; how many times was he offer-
 east, offering sacrifice unto the Lord after the Prophet
 will punish him, that he was a man rejected? How
 se God many good speeches came from him? As when
 of it Samuel met him, he saluted him with these
 striking words; Blessed be thou of the Lord, I pray thee
 or warn again with me, that I may worship the
 ns, word: A man would have thought that Saul
 Now had been a good convert. No, no, before all this
 ou came judgment and doom was set upon him:
 he Lord steals upon him, and sayes nothing,
 h Thunders his Plague upon their Souls, and
 he day his peace.

hou nee Isa. 42. 14. I have a long time held my peace
 eye: have been still and refrained my self; Now I
 yd shall cry like a travelling woman, I will destroy
 will and devour at once. The Lord shews here how
 e Lord deals with men, they go on in their sins, but
 n, though Lord holds his peace: They provoke him
 some day, but the Lord refrains his anger:
 apparitions now all at once his wrath breaketh forth
 et upon them, Psalm 64. 7. God will shoot an Ar-
 s before at them suddenly, their stroke shall be at
 as before, the Lord suddenly shoots a swift Arrow
 do more: no sooner it's shot, but it enters into
 As say howels. When the Lord comes upon a
 A after, he comes suddenly: When he ends the
 be

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day of grace upon him, he doth it suddenly.
ended the day of Grace on the Scribes
Pharisees, even in the very Sermon that
while Christ was Preaching unto them,
were delivered up to the hardness of heart:
many were delivered up to the hardness of heart
in the time of Hosea's Prophecie, Hos. 4.
Ephraim is joyned to Idols, let him alone (the
God :) As if he should say, Sermon, let
alone: Preacher, let him alone: Spirit,
let him alone: Christ let him alone, let
alone. Beloved, if we stand out against
and reject the day of Grace, the Lord may
Word, let such a man alone, and never
vert him: Christ, let such a man alone and
ber redeem him: Spirit, let such a man
lone, and never sanctifie him: Sacrament
let such a man alone, and never Seal up
Comforts unto him: a fearful sign that
are come to this hour: Do we not see
men come to the Word, and the Word
them alone in their sins? Do not men
to the Sacrament, and the Sacrament lead
them still in their filthiness: Men come
good Duties, but good Duties let them alone
and do them no good. And this is the condi-
on of many thousands in the World.

Therefore I think upon this you that have
made a league with your Sins, and an agree-
ment with

ment with
day, th
God ha
never g
A third
very hour
time, lo
to many
any cross
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bath it)

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ment with Hell, I fear this delivered to you
this day, that the day of Grace may be ended :
God may come and clap his curse upon men
and never give them any inkling of it at all.

A third reason is, because God reckons upon
every hour : If God keeps not a strict account
of time, how many Sermons you have had,
how many mercies you have enjoyed, how
many crosses hath he warned you by : If God
kept not a true tale and account of every hours
time, you might rub on many days, and
months and years, and spend much time in ful-
filling of your Lusts ; but God keepeth a reckon-
ing of these things, yea, of every hour, and of
every minute, Acts 17. 30. The times of ig-
norance God regardeth not : but now he
monisheth all men to repent.

Alas, when men live in their sins, through
indignities and ignorance, and know not God,
the Lord takes no such strict notice of them, but
lets them go on longer : But when the Lord
strikes them his Word and Gospel, and af-
fords them the means of Grace, he doth
more strictly look unto them, and takes the
most exact account of them ; before they had
the means of Grace, the Lord winked at them
and did not so narrowly watch them, but
looked over mens ignorance (as the Devil
hath it) but now God sends his Word and
Gospel,

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Gospel, he admonisheth all men to repent, The Lord
winks at not an hour, but sets it down that the Lord
oft thou hast had exhortation from the Lord that thou
ster, how often thou hast had warning by his kind
pels and afflictions, how often thou hast that it is
checks from thine own Conscience; how God unto
ny Admonitions thou hast had from there is a
Friends, how many times thou hast had long fear
Sound of the Gospel to sound in thine Ear from the
to bring thee home unto God, John 2. 7. rebolred
This is the first beginning of Miracles that God to
sus did, John 4. 51. This is the second mira Gods
that Jesus did, saith the Text. God lets down Man
this is the first, this is the second time: The Sabbath
the second Epistle I wrote to you, saith Paul Gods Se
Oh this is the third time I wrote to you, 1 Cor. 13. Ephani
13. That when I come I will not spare: I will up
God lets it down in his Catalogue, This is whose c
first time that I have Warned this man, the reprie
is the second time, this is the third time, thought
when I come I will not spare. Whoring

The Lord counts how long he hath come some C
unto thee, and intreated thee by his mercies are not y
how long he hath allured thee by his All grace and
how long he hath warned thee by his Jud he broug
ments, how oft he hath smote thy heart with we f
fears, and thy Conscience with terrours forth, a
Now, if for all this thou wilt not return, carry.
is it with God to cast thee down to Hell
ever,

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Repent. The fourth Reason and last: It is a wonder
 how that the day of Grace is not ended already; and
 the Lord what thou art not in Hell: When a thing in
 nature by this kind is looked for to be done, it is a wonder
 thou hast that it is not done. It is a wonderful mercy of
 God unto this Kingdom, that yet the day of
 Grace is continued among us in regard of our
 long fear and expectation to the contrary: for
 from the highest to the lowest, we have highly
 repented more and more, and have provoked
 God to his very face. What contempt of
 Gods Word? What neglecting of Gods
 Ordinances? What profanation of Gods
 Sabbath? What scoffing and deriding of
 Gods Servants? How doth Wickedness and
 Impiety stand up in the highest Room,
 and climb up into the highest Chamber? But as
 this is a woman condemned to dye, being with Child,
 she is reprieved for a time, until her Child be
 brought forth: So this Land hath gone a
 whoring from God, yet so long as God hath
 some Children to be brought forth, which
 are not yet come unto the birth, he lets his
 Grace and Gospel continue until these children
 be brought forth: Therefore now (beloved)
 we stick at the birth, and come not
 forth, an Hundred to one but we shall mis-
 carry.

When

The Danger of

When Christ comes first to thy soul, he witnesseth grace and mercy to thee, if thou wilt repent and amend: Yea, he witnesseth forgiveness of sins, Redemption and Satisfaction, if thou wilt believe: but if not, will be a swift Witness against thee, Mat. 23. If thou continue and goest on in thy Sin, Agree with thine Adversary while thou art in the way quickly, Mat. 5. 25. Now God is the way with thee, Christ and his Spirit are the way with thee, thou needst not now Who shall go up to Heaven and bring down the Spirit to thee? Christ's Spirit is knocking at thy heart, and now God offers mercy to thee now thou art in the way, now he calls unto thee to accept of his Mercy, now he commands thee to take Christ, now he bids him calling to thy heart, now he tendereth Grace unto thee, embrace it: Now receive Christ, and make up thy peace with him: Remember the saying of the Apostle, 2 Cor. 13. Examine your selves whether you be in the Faith: Prove your selves: Know you not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you except you be reprobates? As if the Apostle should say, I have been an Apostle to you this year & half, I have Preached thus and thus long unto you; I have wrote one Epistle unto you, to reform those abuses that were among you; and

Deferring Repentance.

Soul, and now I write this second Epistle, to
 declare the whole will and counsel of God to
 witness.
 Now cast up your reckoning, examine
 not your selves, and make up your account :
 Mal. 3. 1. If thou hast gained Christ. Oh, I have
 by Sin (saith one) I have Christ (saith ano-
 ther) : I, but prove it, saith the Apostle, and
 God is your selves : Know you not that by this
 Christ is in you, or else you be reprobates
 now : If he should say, if yet Christ be not in
 you and grace wrought in your hearts, if yet
 is no weeping in your sins, and ga on in
 your wicked ways, it is to be feared you are
 reprobates : you for not obeying, or we for
 not delibering the Truth of God unto you.
 But I trust that ye shall know that we are not
 reprobates, vers. 6. God forbid that this word
 should ever be spoken unto any Soul in this
 Congregation : But this let me say, Is there
 any man that goes on in his Lulls, and in his
 carnal course of life, in Pride, Security,
 hardness of Heart, and Impenitency, that man
 hath not the soundness of grace ? He hath a
 fearful sign and brand of a Reprobate, whose
 Conscience is stilled : it is a fearful sign. If
 he be not a Reprobate before God, yet he is one
 that is not approved, but for the present in a
 wretched and miserable Condition.

How

The Danger of

Now is the time of grace, wherein
hath spoken to your souls, remember
vengeance that is coming towards you,
be reformed. Now the Lords Fatlings
ready, his Oxen and Sheep are slain
and on the board. Christ is sacrificed,
his blood is shed, and the grace of our Lord
Jesus Christ is tendered you: You that
have grace, get more grace: You that have
grace, get grace and Christ, and take heed
neglecting any opportunity of grace; for
they may come unto thee in one hour, that will not
come again.

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